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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 10 TOKYO 002714

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Prime Minister's schedule, November 26

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 27, 2009

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10:51 Met Public Security Intelligence Agency Director Mikinao Kitada at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)
12:09 Met State Minister for Gender Equality Mizuho Fukushima, Professor Takashi Kashima of Jissen Women's Educational Institute
13:03 House of Representatives plenary session
14:50 Met Mayor Yoichi Iha of Ginowan City, Okinawa
15:40 Met President Sunao Tsuboi, other officials of Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization at the Kantei; Health and Labor Minister Akira Nagatsuma also present
16:02 Met Supreme Court Chief Justice Hironobu Takesaki; followed by meeting with Reona Esaki, other Nobel Prize laureates; National Strategy Minister Naoto Kan, Education and Science and Technology Minister Tatsuo Kawabata, State Minister for Administrative Reform Yoshito Sengoku, and others also present
17:39 Meeting of Council on Gender Equality
18:20 Called EU President-elect Herman van Rompuy on the phone.
19:18 Met Japan Research Institute Honorary Chairman Jitsuro Terashima
20:12 Had dinner at Italian restaurant in Minami-aoyama Riva degli Etruschi with House of Councillors member Minoru Kawasaki, others
23:09 Arrived at official residential quarters

4) Premier to consider Marine relocation's effectiveness, indicates current Futenma plan also an option

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged)
November 26, 2009

On the pending issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, Prime Minister Hatoyama has indicated that he will consider the current plan for realigning U.S. forces in Japan, which packages the relocation of Futenma airfield and the transfer of U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam, as an option. "We must consider at the same time that Okinawa's base-hosting burden can be alleviated by moving (U.S. Marines) to Guam," Hatoyama told reporters at his office yesterday evening. "The important thing is how to answer the overall wishes of people in Okinawa Prefecture," he added.

5) Ginowan mayor files petition with premier over Futenma

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 27, 2009

Okinawa Prefecture's Ginowan City Mayor Yoichi Iha called on Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama yesterday at the Diet and handed a petition regarding the pending issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in his city. "I want the burden of Okinawa Prefecture's people to be alleviated by moving the Marines to Guam," Iha said. "I trust you," he added. Hatoyama said he will consider the petition.

6) SDP head Fukushima reluctant about allocating funds for Futenma in state budget

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)

November 26, 2009

Social Democratic Party (SDP) head Mizuho Fukushima in a press conference on Nov. 25 expressed a cautious stance regarding the handling of expenses connected with the relocation of Futenma Air Station in the fiscal 2010 state budget, saying, "I do not want to

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see funds allocated for the project in the budget."

7) Chief cabinet secretary intends to visit Okinawa

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 26, 2009

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano in a press briefing on Nov. 25 made the following comment in connection with the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa: "In the process of the government making its decision, I, too, want to take a firsthand look at conditions at the air station." He will visit Okinawa possibly in early December.

8) Prime Minister: Little time remains for making a decision on Futenma

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 26, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama gave a speech to a meeting of the National Governors' Association, held at the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei) on Nov. 25. Touching on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa, the Prime Minister said: "There is no time to waste. A conclusion must be reached as early as possible after examining the matter thoroughly."

With regard to review of the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement, the Prime Minister also indicated that the conclusion of a special agreement on the environment is also one option. "Concluding a special agreement on the environment could be one option," he said. "We will take action in line with Japan's position."

During the meeting, Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima said: "Even the U.S. military has indicated that the Futenma base is a dangerous base. I want to see the danger of the base eliminated and the noise level reduced as soon as possible."

9) Okinawa governor says additional condition for accepting Henoko relocation plan is dispersal of Futenma functions

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
November 27, 2009

Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima gave an exclusive interview to Asahi Shimbun on Nov. 26. He indicated that in addition to moving the runways of the replacement facility farther offshore than currently planned, "it is necessary to disperse the functions of the Futenma base to other bases while the construction work is being completed" for him to accept the plan to relocate the U.S. forces' Futenma Air Station (in Ginowan City, Okinawa) to Henoko in Nago City.

It is believed that based on the conditions set by the governor the ministries of foreign affairs and defense will step up negotiations with the U.S. side.

According to the Okinawa Prefectural Government, about 50 helicopters and transport planes are stationed regularly at the Futenma base at present, resulting in some 20,000 instances of noise annually. In the interview, Nakaima pointed out that Futenma is

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surrounded by densely-populated residential areas and removing the danger posed by this facility is an urgent task. He stressed that

even if a decision is made on relocation to Henoko, it is necessary to reduce the number of takeoffs and landings of helicopters and other aircraft at the Futenma base while construction work for the new facility is going on. He said: "The operational level (at Futenma) should be reduced drastically and (its functions) should be dispersed. This will reduce the probability of the danger (of accidents)."

Furthermore, in order to reduce noise and remove the danger at areas close to the relocation site, "(the runways) need to be moved farther into the sea," citing the location of the runways farther offshore as a condition for his accepting the relocation plan.

Nakaima said that unless the above conditions are met, the permit for reclamation of land in the proposed relocation site "cannot be issued so easily" and demanded that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama consult with Okinawa before making a decision.

10) Saudi Aramco to store oil in Okinawa

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Excerpt)
November 26, 2009

President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Khalid A. Al-Falih of Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil company, run by the Saudi Arabian government, revealed yesterday that the company will soon start negotiations with the Japanese government on a plan to jointly store oil in Okinawa. He responded to an interview with the Nikkei in Tokyo. The plan, if realized, will likely contribute to strengthening the nation's energy security, since it will become possible for Japan to procure crude oil on a priority basis in times of emergency in return for offering storehouses.

11) LDP to oppose cargo inspection special measures legislation

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
November 27, 2009

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at a joint meeting of its Land and Transportation Division, National Defense Division, and Foreign Affairs Division on Nov. 26 decided to oppose a cargo inspection special measures bill, which the government submitted to the extraordinary Diet session. The LDP along with the Japan Renaissance Club, the Your Party, and the Group to Protect National Interests and the People's Livelihood (Hiranuma Group) have jointly submitted a counter proposal that includes a provision enabling the dispatch of Self-Defense troops in the event the Japan Coast Guard finds it difficult to carry out the mission.

12) Refueling continuation bill submitted to Diet

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 26, 2009

The Liberal Democratic Party and the Japan Renaissance Party on Nov. 25 submitted to the House of Councillors a bill to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. The bill is designed to extend the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which is to expire next January, for one year. The New Komeito did not take part in the joint presentation of the legislation.

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13) Clinton expresses appreciation to Okada for Japan's Afghanistan aid

ASAHI (Page 9) (Full)
November 27, 2009

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada had a telephone conference with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last night at the request of the U.S. government. Clinton spelled out the U.S. government's strategy toward Afghanistan, which President Barack Obama will announce on Dec. 1. Clinton then expressed appreciation for the Japanese government's aid worth 5 billion yen for that nation.

Okada replied that stabilizing and reconstructing Afghanistan is extremely important for global stability. He added: "I hope President Obama's announcement will strengthen the international community's resolve (to support Afghanistan)."

14) Gov't to propose review of SOFA every 3 years

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Abridged)
November 27, 2009

The government will sound out the United States on a proposal to review the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement every three years as a measure to mitigate Okinawa Prefecture's base-hosting burden in connection with the pending issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in the prefecture, officials said yesterday. The current plan for relocating Futenma airfield is to build an alternative facility in a coastal area of Camp Schwab in the island prefecture's northern coastal city of Nago to take over its heliport functions, based on an intergovernmental agreement reached between Japan and the United States. Meanwhile, the U.S. government has indicated that it will accept the idea of moving the relocation site of Futenma airfield to an area off the coast of Camp Schwab. The ruling Democratic Party of Japan has insisted on moving Futenma airfield out of Okinawa, so the DPJ-led government concluded that it will have to work out additional measures to reduce the burden on Okinawa in order to accept the modified plan.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama met with Japan Research Institute Chairman Jitsuro Terashima yesterday at his office. Terashima will visit the United States early next week and is expected to exchange views with his U.S. counterparts, including measures to mitigate Okinawa's base-hosting burden.

15) Blue-ribbon panel on secret pacts to hold first meeting today

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
November 27, 2009

The Foreign Ministry has been investigating the secret pacts on (the introduction of) nuclear weapons and other matters that reportedly exist between Japan and the United States. A blue-ribbon panel tasked with verifying the ministry's investigation will meet for the first time today.

Reportedly there are secret pacts in four areas. Documents have already come to light that seem to prove the existence of one allowing the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan that is believed to have been concluded when the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty

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was revised in 1960. An increasing number of people also believe in the existence of a secret pact designed to Japan to bear the cost of restoring U.S. bases to their original states, concluded ahead of the revision of Okinawa to Japan in 1972. The blue-ribbon panel plans to make a final decision on the existence of the secret agreements by mid-January next year.

Reportedly there have been secret pacts on: (1) introduction of nuclear weapons, which was entered into during the conclusion of the revised Japan-U.S. Security Treaty; (2) combat operations during a contingency on the Korean Peninsula; (3) introduction of nuclear weapons, which was believed to have been concluded before the reversion of Okinawa; and (4) Japan shouldering the cost of returning lands to their original states during the reversion of Okinawa.

According to a Foreign Ministry source, the existence of the secret pact on the introduction of nuclear weapons that was concluded before the reversion of Okinawa has yet to be verified. The panel will continue probing this matter as well.

16) Budget screening team rules "sympathy budget" needs to be "reviewed"; will wait for political decision on PAC-3s

SANKEI (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)
November 27, 2009

The Government Revitalization Unit (chaired by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama) continued on Nov. 26 its screening of FY2010 budget requests to weed out wasteful spending. This was the eighth day of budget screening. With regard to budget requests from the Ministry of Defense (MOD), the screening team demanded a review of the budget request for the labor cost of employees working on U.S. bases (123.3 billion yen) under Japan's share of the expenses of U.S. Forces Japan (omoiyari yosan or sympathy budget) because the wage scales are not on par with local levels.

During the discussions, the following opinions were voiced: "The wage scales should follow those of the employees of the national government" and "consideration should be given to balance with the wages of those in the same job category in the local area." Twelve of the screening team members demanded a "review." Meanwhile, the screening team did not make a decision on the MOD's budget requests for PAC-3 ground-to-air missiles for missile interception and the Self-Defense Forces' procurement of ships and other equipment (new allocations in FY10 for expenditures rolled over from previous fiscal years totaling 865.5 billion yen) and opted to wait for a political decision. This is the first time that the screening teams have deferred their conclusion pending a political decision.

Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and State Minister for Consumer Affairs and Declining Birthrate Mizuho Fukushima have indicated a cautious stance with regard to additional deployment of PAC-3s.

Concerning the other MOD budget requests, the screening team demanded a budget cut for SDF supplies procurement (27.1 billion yen) and for uniform and other garment purchases (9 billion yen). The team also demanded a review of the budget request for arms and ammunition procurement (11.9 billion yen). The request for an increase of 3,500 SDF personnel (at a cost of 7.2 billion yen) was rejected, while the requests to fund soundproofing of houses near U.S. bases in Okinawa and elsewhere (36.3 billion yen) and payments

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for renewal of leases on land used for defense facilities (118.9 billion yen) were approved.

17) "Sympathy budget" not axed by budget screening team; review of wage scales of U.S. military base employees demanded

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpts)
November 27, 2009

The Government Revitalization Unit (chaired by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama) conducted the third day of the second half (totaling four days) of its screening of FY2010 budget requests to weed out wasteful spending at the National Printing Bureau's employees' gymnasium in Ichigaya, Tokyo, on Nov. 26. Under Japan's share in the expenses of U.S. Forces Japan (omoiyari yosan or "sympathy budget"), the screening team demanded a review of the labor cost of employees working on U.S. bases (123.334 billion yen) in the course of future negotiations on the Japan-U.S. special agreement and labor-management bargaining on the grounds that the wage scales are not on par with local levels. Other than that, the budget requests were approved, in effect, by the screening team.

Meanwhile, with regard to the expenses for the nationwide deployment of ground-to-air Patriot missiles (PAC-3), the screening team decided to wait for a political decision since the drafting of the government's new National Defense Program Guidelines has been postponed for one year.

18) Japan to launch third intelligence-gathering optical satellite on Nov. 28 to monitor North Korea

SANKEI (Page 2) (Excerpt)
November 26, 2009

The government's third intelligence-gathering optical satellite is scheduled for launch on board the 16th domestically manufactured large-size H2A rocket on the morning of Nov. 28 at the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture. The third optical satellite is

capable of identifying a 60-centimeter square object on the ground. It can determine the movements of North Korea, which is continuing missile and nuclear development, more precisely than can be done at present.

19) Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano announces reexamination of government decision to scrap GX rocket development program

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
November 27, 2009

The Government Revitalization Unit (GRU) has decided to scrap the medium-size GX rocket development program in the process of screening project requests to identify unnecessary ones. Referring to this decision by the government, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano at a press conference on Nov. 26 announced a plan to have the GRU reexamine its decision.

During the screening of the GX rocket development program, the Finance Ministry submitted data noting that 70 billion yen in tax money has been invested. However, Hirano said, "I have heard that the amount of tax money invested in the project is between 26-27 billion yen, and the remaining amount is private funds." He then said, "Since (the basis of) the decision was wrong, we should

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address this issue after holding another round of discussions on it."

20) Yen rises to 14-year high, with U.S. dollar falling to 86 yen range

NIKKEI (Top Play) (Lead paragraph)
November 27, 2009

The U.S. dollar plunged to 86.29 yen against the dollar at one point on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market yesterday, recording its lowest level in 14 years and four months. Investors converted their dollars into yen amid persistent speculation that the U.S. Federal Reserve will maintain its ultra-easy monetary policy for a long period of time. The yen's effective exchange rate, a measure of the value of the yen against major currencies, also surged to about a 9-month high. The yen's abrupt rise could deal a serious blow to the Japanese economy, which has fallen into a mild deflationary phase, as it will unavoidably exacerbate corporate earnings and bring down import prices.

21) Prime minister during meeting with Nobel Prize winners hints at revision of government decision to cut science and technology budgets

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 27, 2009

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama on Nov. 26 invited six Nobel Prize winners, including Reona Esaki, to the Prime Minister's Official Residence (the Kantei) and exchanged views with them on science and technology policy. In response to a number of government decisions to cut or trim science and technology-related budgets made during the screening of project requests by the Government Revitalization Unit (GRT), the Nobel Prize recipients asked the prime minister to give special consideration to the science and technology area. The prime minister hinted at the possibility of the government taking a second look at its decisions, saying, "It is not my intention to give the impression that the government is trying to cut science and technology budgets."

Those visited the Kantei include Susumu Tonegawa, Hideki Shirakawa, Ryoji Noyori, Masatoshi Koshihara, and Makoto Kobayashi in addition to Esaki. They expressed a number of views, such as that Japan can only survive with science and technology and that it is reckless to identify whether projects are necessary or not during the brief screening process. The prime minister told reporters: "Science and technology are very important intellectual properties for a country without natural resources. I would like to consider ways to utilize these properties."

22) Pro-Taiwan parliamentary league includes 67 DPJ lawmakers

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
November 26, 2009

The Japan-Taiwan parliamentarians' council, a supra-partisan league aiming to strengthen relations between Japan and Taiwan, held its first general meeting on Nov. 25 since the last House of Representatives election, and agreed that Takeo Hiramuma, an independent, will keep serving as the council's president. The membership after the election has now grown to 188. The largest

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group of members belongs to the Liberal Democratic Party (103) followed by the Democratic Party of Japan (67).

ZUMWALT